

# Organizing People



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# ***Organizing Students***

## ***By Brittany Courtot***

### ***Classroom Rules & Routines***

Within daily life routines can quickly turn into ruts that cause one's eyes to glaze, however in many aspects of life routines or rules are essential to a successful outcome. Consider sports, how bowlers and golfers seem to go through self-made dances and gestures before the ball ever leaves their hands or their clubs hits the ball. In either instance, the use of routine is critical to the players in being effective – to the point that many require silence to focus on the steps involved in their self-tailored processes. Not everything requires a routine to be effective, in fact many people avoid routine like the plague to escape boredom or sameness. However, when managing large groups of people to focus on particular things, routines can enable groups to be more effective in meeting their goals. This is the reason that routines in a classroom are essential to maximizing student learning.

Harry K. Wong, an educator of 35 years and writer/lecturer on education, said that,

Contrary to what many people believe, the number-one problem in the classroom is not discipline—it is the lack of procedures and routines. Classroom management has nothing to do with discipline. You manage a store; you do not discipline a store. You manage a classroom; you do not discipline a classroom. Behavior will rarely become a problem when effective teaching is already taking place. (The Well-Managed Classroom p.2)

Wong asserts that a proactive approach in terms of routines and rules can help manage a classroom and lessen undesired behaviors. To do this, a teacher must make sure that the rules and routines are clearly established early on and reviewed to inspire memorization in students. The key is that the rules/expectations are both verbalized and written down for the students to constantly see, this way the rules begin to become familiarized in the student's minds. Therefore, procedures such as signing out or taking a pass to leave the room and if you have to raise your hand or not to answer a question, are

turned into habits. These habits of the classroom encourage students to be productive and stay engaged.

Procedures in the classroom also ensure that students stay involved in their work without wasting time on correcting students' behavior or instruction time. Essentially, the more a teacher does on the first day in terms of setting up routines and rules, the more students can learn throughout the school year without interruptions. On the other end of the spectrum, when students know the routines they can easily transition from one thing to the next and hone in on what's more important. It also breeds a sense of responsibility in students, which boosts morale and furthers student's confidence in dealing with any situation, expected or otherwise. These procedures create a structure to maximize learning time, but also they lessen the teacher's workload and lower the student's frustrations from either repetition or confusion.

Teachers should consider thoughtfully and creatively a wide range of potential situations or snafus in their classrooms to address proactively in their classroom's rule. Overall there are no right or wrong rules a teacher can implement as long as the rules aid in the efficiency and safe/calm nature of their classroom environment.

When crafting rules teachers should be aware of certain rule characteristics that works in getting student to follow them. The first characteristic to consider is involving the class in creating the rules and routines, as this gives the students a sense of ownership over the rules and are more likely to follow them. Secondly, a teacher should keep rules short, clear, positive and to the point so as not to confuse or intimidate students with a flood of negative information pounding down onto them. Thirdly, teachers should include humor into classroom rules when they can, for example teacher/writer Rick Morris uses music from old TV shows to signal different routines or a switch of activities. Lastly, teachers should not be afraid to change rules that aren't working. Rules can sometimes treated as experimental, changing as you get to know what works and what doesn't work for particular students.

Some common, important procedures to consider are the following: procedures for absent students, [quieting a class](#), what to do with students who finish early, starting a class, leaving the room, group work, getting up from their desk, and dismissing the class at the end of the period. The solutions for any of these procedures are up to the teacher

gauging their students and filtering that through their own teaching philosophies. For example, quieting a class for the beginning of the class can be done in a number of ways ranging from visual cues (switching the lights off) to musical cues (clapping or music).

Overall rules and procedures require creative and the effective solutions, which can alter based upon one's perspectives or grade they are teaching. Rules and routines are critical to maximizing student learning and minimizing the stress and confusion that potentially could be within the classroom. Something else that is critical towards maximizing student learning is ensuring that students are engaged and creative in pursuing their goals.

### **Student Engagement & Creativity**

There is an old idiom that states, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." Simply put, it means that you can tell/show something to someone yet you cannot force he/she to accept it or do something. The same applies in the classroom to an extent, teachers cannot *force* their students to absorb our lessons, but can *encourage* their students to engage into the content through student interests, fun activities and exciting perspectives on the content.

What is engagement exactly? It has long been discovered that engagement is intrinsic, meaning it comes from an inner desire for internal satisfaction such as understanding or improvement unlike external rewards such as grades or prizes. Many researchers argue that children are motivated by their own thirst for the aforementioned internal satisfactions.

Some of these internal drives are competence, community contribution, and meaningful or relevant work. The first is competence, where one feels that they've been successful in what they set out to do or learn, succeeding in this can drive people to engage further. On the other hand however, feeling as though one has failed can make it continuously harder to participate or try again. Picture a student who has a really strong ability in English, which can be seen in their engagement in English Class and outside the classroom in a school writing club. However, that same student struggles with Math class and over time that student begins to disengage from Math in totality. Therefore, it helps for a student to have victories in order to engage, no matter how small they might seem.

Secondly is community contribution, which is when one feels that they've made a contribution to a group. When one contributes to a group a bond of acceptance and feeling of safety blooms therein. In a classroom community this bond of solidarity occurs between students, their peers and the teacher. Lastly is meaningful work, where one feels that they've connected the schoolwork to something important to future goals or the now. Students will not be engaged to learn something that has no usefulness in their lives, present or future. However, students come into a classroom already with pre-dispositions or perspectives on learning – which expands beyond their deeper need for the above-mentioned internal rewards.

When children are developing, their environment at home initially molds their approach towards learning. Therefore, a child whose home environment has many educational stimuli around nurtures a positive attitude towards learning in that child, the tells of that outcome are seen through autonomy and a real willingness to learn. The opposite of this rings true, where a negative attitude towards learning can hinder positive learning attitude from growing later in life, thusly lowering a child's engagement in their classroom. Teachers cannot control what home environments instill in children about learning, but teachers can attempt to figure out those attitudes and strive to alter them accordingly. Some studies say that what the teachers does in the classroom in terms of learning attitudes has a larger impact on children than what happens at home.

But what does engagement look like in the classroom? Well, that's tough question for teachers to answer. Is engagement something that we can see externally, such as students appearing to pay attention and doing assignments? Or is engagement something that only surfaces inside the students? If the latter, how can a lack of visual cues ever hope to help teachers gauge student's investment in learning? Michael et al (2013) argued that the general breakdown of the components to gauge engagements were the following:

1. Engaged in thought involves a psychological investment in learning and mastery of academic material, as well as the desire for challenge. Planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's thinking, along with self-control, are indications that one is engaged in thought.
2. Engaged in feeling refers to students' emotions regarding their relationships with others in the school environment (e.g., teachers, peers) and the general sense of belonging in school that comes from such relationships. Engaged in feeling also refers to students' sense of

connectedness to, interest in, and passion for academic content. This is often accompanied by a strong sense of confidence regarding academic abilities.

3. Engaged in action refers to the various activities and involvements in school that are directed toward learning and academic tasks. Signs of active engagement include attending and contributing to class, following school rules, completing assignments, studying, and concentrating on academic tasks. (Michael et al., 2013)

A further element of gauging student engagement for teachers to consider is to monitor if students are taking their new understandings from the material and using it in their own lives – which brings it back to the aforementioned relevance.

Now that we know the what and the look of engagement, how can teachers engage their own students? To engage teachers must build a strong rapport with students and the students with their peers. If teachers develop a rapport, a friendship with students, students will begin to see the teacher as more human and that the teacher is genuinely interested in their success. This social element of student investment is critical, because if a student feels involved or supported they also feel respected and that creates an environment that student feel at ease in so they can explore the content. Thusly, students that are shy around a particular type of person (boisterous people) might engage in one class with other types of people (calm people) easier.

Harkening back to relevance, another engagement method is to make the content both relevant and exciting. This enables student to see how the information will help them succeed in a matter important to them in the present or towards a future goal. The National Writing Project suggests that English teachers make writing come alive by having students write for real audience, such as writing editorials for newspapers or publishing their creative writings.

Another key engagement method is to give students choices and control within their learning or assessments of learning. This enables students to relate content to their own interests and real-life goals easier than a teacher trying to do the same and juggling many students' diverse likes and goals. This is why a wave of project-based learning schools are cropping up, schools where students driven their educations through self-initiated projects. If students are driving their own learning, there is a passionate for the content that teachers could only hope to recreate otherwise.

Unfortunately, studies in the 1980's, 90's and onwards have illustrated falling engagement in students in the classroom and increases in student's faltering academically. (Meece & McColskey, 1997). The reason for falling investment is partly due to many teacher not adopting the methods mentioned above or any other methods, but there are other factors at play as well. Schools today tend to focus more on memorization or rote learning to create higher scores on standardized tests. Firstly, these tests constrain teachers from creating captivating lesson, just for the mere sake of time management. Teachers only have so much time during the day and when that time is eaten up by more and more high-stakes standardized test preparation, the less relevance and interest-driven instruction a classroom can had. Secondly and lastly, even parents or the community can hinder engagement through misunderstanding the new methods that teachers use, some of which might seem unproductive at a glance yet are actually hitting the core learning goals.

However, teachers must persist in engaging students for the benefits outweigh the hurdles leapt over to get there. Engaged students have been found to be more satisfied, as they receive those internal rewards, which leads to more effort and higher grades/text scores. Students who are invested academically are less likely to drop out of school, which is a real issue today more and more. Engagement has also been found to lead to less disciplinary problems or incidents of misbehavior as students are really focused on the absorbing the content rather than fooling around. Getting a student's attention can be real challenge for teachers considering the age of nearly instant information that we live in bathing our students in constant stimulation. Therefore, teachers must be creative in their methods to keep students focused, so they can lower the chance of students misbehaving.

Speaking of creativity, engagement requires a lot of creative ideas and projects in order to keep students absorbed. However, due to standardized tests and other commitments, much of the time creativity gets put onto the backburner of education. This debate of creativity in the classroom has been going on since John Dewey argued for creativity in the classroom in 1916, but more than ever the question remains: Has creativity lost its place in the classroom? Psychologist Michael Hogan at the National University of Galway Ireland argues that,

...It is clear that much of education is focused on standardized testing and memory recall. In Bloom's classic taxonomy of learning outcomes, remembering information (knowledge) is the foundation stone in his hierarchy of learning outcomes. However, higher-order learning outcomes are also desirable: beyond memory of information we should seek to cultivate comprehension, analysis, and evaluation skills — and at the top of the hierarchy Bloom places *synthesis*, which implies creativity and possibly the creation of some new knowledge or other artifact of culture. Without synthesis and the creative push to constantly create something new, cultural evolution would cease. While not all creative products result in positive evolutionary outcomes, we nevertheless depend on the creativity of people to help us survive, adapt and flourish.... (Hogan, 2012)

Plainly, Galway argues that creativity has other skills embedded within it that should translate well into settings other than art or music class – although both cultivate said skills. Creativity is multi-faceted, in that if one is creative they are also good at taking risks, are self-directed, ask questions/analyze materials, seek to understand something and thusly are motivated individuals within their creative pursuits. All these skills are useful in other content areas besides art and music, in fact many are life skills that are important for students throughout their lives including a sense of self-motivated and direction, which loops us back around to engagement. In order to keep creativity in schools teachers and educators need to redefine creativity's image in education from something “extra” or “special” to one that is universal and globally important in its usefulness. A possible avenue to this end is to incorporate projects into one's classroom, which are creative or use creative processes so as to show the physical manifestation of creativity's global importance.



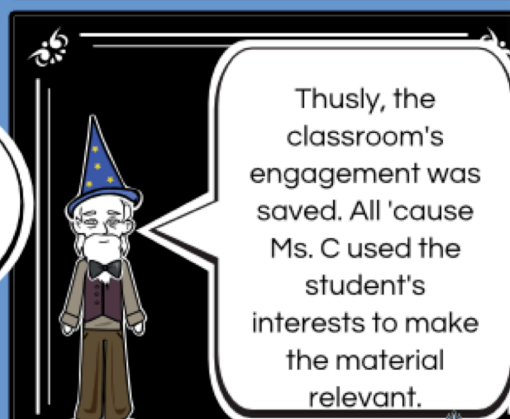
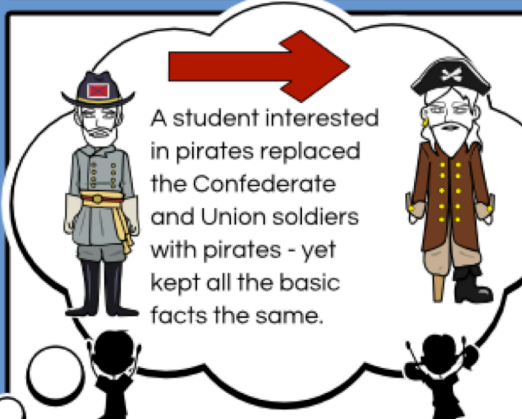
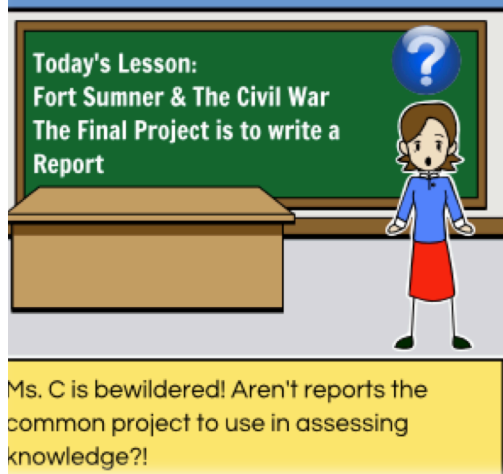
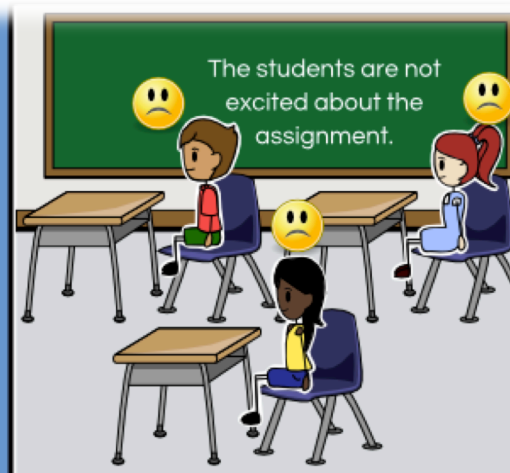
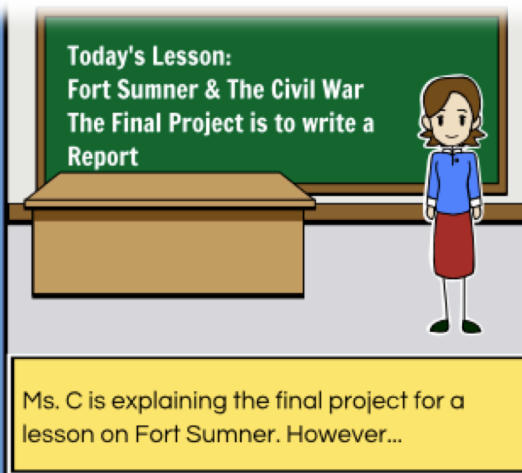
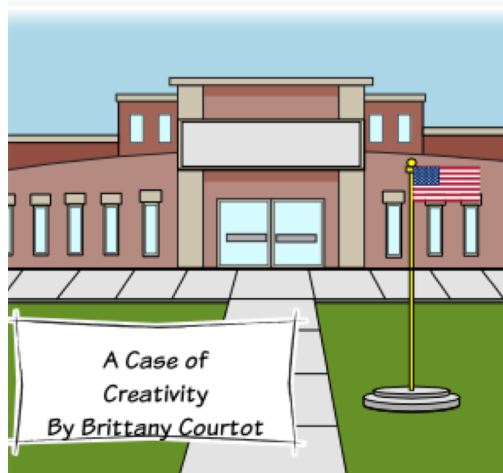


Figure 1: These comic panels were made using [Storyboardthat.com](https://www.storyboardthat.com/).

## ***Management of Student using Technology***

Technology is a tool for the classroom, just like any other tool before it. However, just like any other tool it can be misused if people aren't taught the rules of the tool, so to speak. More and more students are disengaging from class in order to use some sort of other technology such as computers for leisure activities (computer games, social media, etc.) or cell phones for texting. Teachers must be monitoring their student's use of technology within the classroom, but is that all that teachers can accomplish?

Karen Hume, an educational writer for Tech Magazine, suggested that the first thing to do was to make students understand that technology is a tool and have students,



“complete preparatory work away from the equipment. For example, storyboarding before creating a video or a PowerPoint/Keynote presentation ensures that students will know what they are going to do and can get to work right away.” (Hume 2011) In this fashion

students are able to better appreciate the technology and are less likely to abuse its usage.” To facilitate this, teachers must establish their technology policies at the beginning of the school year, putting into place proactive responses such as cueing students to turn off computers or phones by flicking off the light switch.

However, students will always strive to find loopholes around the rules to use technology, as Anita s. Charles, Direction of Teacher Education at Bates Collage, discovered in her case study at Riverpark High School in New England. Students had gotten to the point that they were hiding phones in pencil cases to sneak them inside the classroom. Yet, overall Anita Charles found that rules in schools for cell phone and

technology use were something of “a grey area...a management issue”. Some times students were allowed to use phones during one part of the day, say in the hallways or at lunch, and other times those students were chastised for doing that same thing another day. Both teachers and students were confused and thusly nothing got better in terms of addressing the school’s concern about texting in class.

The best advice for teachers managing technology isn’t to take the phones away, as there is some legal tape mixed up into that, but to clearly give the students the parameters then experiment with what works and what doesn’t work with technology policies. However what helps is if the teacher and student have a rapport, the students are more likely to forgo the phone use if the teacher says not to because they respect that teacher. One last tidbit of advice is following the adage of, “If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em” . A teacher can do this by [using phones/ipods/etc. within their lesson](#) in a structured and monitored fashion.

In organizing students, the main thing to be considered across the board is to make judgment calls based on knowing your students by being proactive in telling the rules and procedures early on. This is so habits are developed quickly and instructional time is not wasted for both you and your students.

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Sophie Nelson. (December 18, 2013) *Cells in School*. [Photograph] Retrieved from: <http://www.ahsknightlynews.com/student-life/2013/12/18/social-media-is-exploding-at-alter/> **CC BY-NC-SA**

# Managing Groups

By Alyssa McLean

Managing groups is not always easy. Students are excited to work with their friends, share their opinions, go on a field trip, or get a chance to work outside. All of these activities are great and should be encouraged in the classroom but it is important to still be able to manage the class and keep the activity fun and safe for everyone involved.

## **Group Routines**

Routines are essential for group management. Routines create safe and positive environments for student learning as well as keeping the students aware of what to expect during class time. Since routines are so important to the classroom, they take time to perfect. As Brenda Angotti, a music teacher in Millinocket, ME who is in her 40<sup>th</sup> year of teaching, states, “It isn’t easy to have the “rules” the same as they were yesterday and that they will be when the students come the next time. That being said, consistency is what makes managing a classroom easier because the students always know the expectations as well as the consequences” (Brenda Angotti, Personal Communication, March 23, 2014). The following section offers tips to help create strong routines that keep the class running well.

Seating charts can be a great group routine so everyone knows where each student will be sitting and so the teacher can easily learn names. These charts are best at the beginning of the year so the teacher can use them to learn the student’s names and so students can as well. When considering seating arrangements, it is important for all students to be able to see the teacher and the board clearly. The room should be well organized so students may easily find the pencil sharpener, trash cans, and drop-boxes for completed assignments and the placement of such items should not create distractions or traffic jams within the classroom.

Creating clear expectations are a key factor to good group routines and teachers should be consistent role models. Classroom expectations should be similar to the school-wide expectations and should be fair but still firmly enforced. Enforcing the expectations sends the message to students that the rules are important and will be taken seriously. Enforcement of the rules also makes dealing with behavior issues easier and quicker because both the student and teacher know how such behavior will be handled and what the consequences are. If issues do arise, stay

calm and reasonable while dealing with the situation. The teacher should not try to “win” because they have power, as this will make the situation even worse for the teacher and student.

As you create your expectations here are some important ideas to consider: How will you handle absent and dismissed students? What about interruptions during class? What should you do if one of your students wanders around the room or leaves too frequently? How will you handle inappropriate behavior in the classroom? Make the expectations clear to students, whether it is through going over the syllabus, making them available on a class website, or simply just posting them in the room so they are a visual reminder. Do not ask students to do anything you would not be comfortable with doing. Don’t forget to consider how you will show each student that they are important to the class. Students will feel encouraged if they know they are respected and important to the teacher. The teacher should acknowledge the accomplishments of every student. Brenda Angotti says, “It is so important to notice and encourage the positive behaviors and accomplishments even if they are only small steps.” Also remember that it is okay to make a change in routines if you find a change is needed.

### **Effective Class Discussions**

A great classroom promotes student collaboration and participation in class. However, many teachers struggle with creating this welcoming environment without also

causing behavior problems that are difficult to manage. Brenda Angotti explains that keeping middle school students on task but still participating was a challenge throughout her career. “Usually it was because some days they really didn’t like who they were and just needed to have time to work things out and know that the adult in charge would still appreciate their good qualities and continue to hold them to a high standard that each and

every one of them knew they could attain.” One way to help students reach these high standards is to unite them with a common goal and allow

them to express their ideas through strong group discussions.

In order for group discussions to be effective, however, all students need to feel that the room is a safe environment for them to express their ideas and that their input is important. A good class discussion should allow students to talk about sensitive issues without creating an uncomfortable feeling within the classroom. A way to accomplish this atmosphere is to make the



Clip Art of Class Discussion (Public Domain)



topics of discussion concepts that all students can contribute to. When students feel confident about the material they are discussing, they can easily develop new thoughts and opinions to share. During group discussions, the teacher should act as the facilitator of the conversation and never judge any idea a student expresses. The teacher should make sure that all comments are positive and do not put down any other student's ideas. While discussing, students will naturally judge each other's ideas they have shared but this is important to the discussion because it is part of the process students go through to develop their own opinions on the subject. Each student should get an opportunity to share their thoughts. This being said, the discussion should not be dominated by one or two students. "When you spend too much time with individuals for any reason you lose the rest of the class" (B. Angotti, personal communication, March 23, 2014).

If you plan on having a discussion during class, make sure the room is arranged so that each student can see one another. During discussion, humans naturally want to look into the eyes of the people they are talking to so we should allow this to happen in the classroom. As with anything in life, practice makes perfect. Discussions will become very meaningful and easy to manage if they are a frequent event in the classroom. Students will become use to sharing their ideas this way and will grow to be more and more comfortable with taking the risk to participate in the discussion.

### **Managing a Large Class**

More often than not, teachers feel negatively towards large classes because they feel that smaller classes yield better learning results. However, scientific research, "denies the existence of a very close correlation between the number of pupils in a class and the academic results of those pupils (Vale'rien, 1991, p. 7)" (as cited in O'Sullivan, 2006). Although it is reassuring to know that students still learn just as well in big classes, this information does not remove the challenges of working with a large class. Teachers of large classrooms must find time to assess the larger amount of work they receive from students while still giving valuable and accurate feedback to the students. These teachers must also create a positive, comfortable atmosphere in a room that may be over crowded and



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cramped. This section provides strategies to overcome these challenges.

In a large classroom, teachers must find creative ways to keep all of the students entertained and engaged. One way to do this is to teach very clearly so all students can hear and understand. Ask lots of questions that will keep the students thinking about the material but remember to always be enthusiastic. Students will want to stay interested in the class if they see that their teacher is passionate about the subject and is enjoying teaching.

Since it is not easy to give individualized attention to students in larger classes, have the students work in small groups. While students are working in groups, encourage each student to be a leader and contribute equally to the group. Small groups create meaningful and engaged learning in a personalized way that might otherwise not be easy to create. Students who are introverts or intrapersonal learners will feel more comfortable to participate in these small groups because it is less intimidating to speak in front of three or four peers than a group of twenty or more. While students are working in groups, signals are effective tools to use as means of getting their attention once again. Silent signals are much more effective and peaceful than yelling to the entire class. If behavior problems arise during class work signals can stop it as well. “Many times all it takes is a glance, moving nearer the student, calling on that student” (Angotti, Personal Communication, March 23, 2014). When creating groups, keep differentiated instruction in mind, since large scale differentiation is not always easy. Learning styles and individual needs can be met through incorporating differentiation into the small groups. It is also important to allow the students to make choices in big classes so they are all engaged and feeling important.

### **Group Work Management**

While group work is especially helpful in large classes, it should be an essential practice in every classroom. Most of the careers students will have once they graduate will require them to collaborate with their colleagues. Learning good collaboration skills at an early age is very important. Successful group work requires clear expectations from the teacher, as well as good supervision. “Teachers must set clear expectations and devise a fair and meaningful way to assess student work. Most important, the teacher should constantly be circulating around the room, looking over shoulders, asking and answering questions, giving feedback, and taking notes on student progress” (Quinn, 2012, p. 47).



To create strong group work skills in the classroom, start out with small group projects that eventually lead to bigger projects. This strategy will allow the students to develop their collaboration skills because the risks are lower and they have time. The first few group projects will work best if students have time to finish them in class. While the students are working, keep an agenda, either on the board, on a electronic document, or paper, so they know the tasks they are expected to complete. The teacher may assign roles within the group as well so students know what their individual responsibilities are. Once students know how to work well in a group, they are ready to move on to bigger group assignments. These assignments should still be monitored by the teacher but the students should also be allowed more autonomy. Since these bigger projects will most likely be finished outside of class time, the teacher should have each student keep a log of their group work. This way, the teacher can get a good idea of the group dynamics and how well each student participated. After the project is over, the students should fill out a reflection that will help them understand how they felt they did in the group and what they would like to work on for the next assignment. Possible questions to ask students to consider in their reflection include: What did you feel you did well on? What did you feel your group did poorly on? What would you like to improve for next time? As students become better at working in groups, they will not require as much teacher oversight.

Group work can be very effective for student learning and is very applicable to the real world. However, it does not come without challenges. As you create your own group work assignments there are many possible issues that you should consider. Students may not always work well in a group or they may fight to be put in a different group. Some students may not like each other and create problems within the group. It is up to the teacher whether they should change the groups but working with people we may not get along with is a fact of life and is a valuable skill for students. If the room is cramped, students may want to bring their group somewhere else to work. If students are talking with their group members, they may be disruptive to other students who are trying to work in study areas. When students reach the higher levels of group work where the assignment will be finished outside of class time, schedule and transportation conflicts can occur. Before assigning group work, teachers should consider these, as well as other issues that can arise, so they can help students overcome these issues while still experiencing the best possible group collaboration.

## **Management While Outdoors and on Trips**

Taking students outdoors and on trips is fun and exciting for everyone involved but many teachers do not do it because they are afraid of losing control of the students and they are comfortable to their classroom environment and fear leaving its safe confines. According to Darius Kalvatis, getting students ready for making the outdoors your classroom only takes three easy steps: 1) Establish ground rules for behavior outside, 2) Practice the rules while the class is still inside, and 3) Start with small outdoor activities that lead to larger ones.

While the class is still inside, establish the rules. It is crucial for the teacher to always know where the students are during an outside activity. The teacher should explain where the boundaries are to students so they know where they can and cannot explore. Students will be more willing to accept these boundaries if they understand why they are in place. The teacher should also explain clearly why they must stay within the boundaries. Within the boundaries, create a meeting spot for everyone. When the teacher wants students' attention, they should use signals that can have different meaning. For example, a flag could be held up when the teacher wants students to listen where they are and a whistle can be blown when students should return to the decided meeting spot. During times when the class is gathered, the teacher should always be sure to face the sun so the students do not have to be looking into the sun while they are trying to pay attention to directions. Kalvatis says, "Be prepared for surprises. Just as this is a novel learning experience for your students, it is also an opportunity for you to learn"(p. 37). Kalvatis also suggests to not go outside as a reward, rather outside time should be worked into the curriculum so students have a more meaningful and educational experience.

While the students are inside, everyone should practice the rules for outside. Actually acting out the rules will help students internalize and remember them better when it comes time to go outside. As the teacher is explaining the rules of the outdoors they may call on student volunteers to act out the appropriate behavior. During this process, the teacher should allow room for students to add rules they think would be applicable and make them feel safer while they are outside. The teacher should also praise the students for being well behaved in the classroom and tell them that they believe they can handle going outside. Going outside would not have been an option if they were misbehaving students. After students know the rules it is time to go outside! Teachers can start with small, low-risk outdoor activities to get students acclimated

to going outside. Students will know that if they behave well outside, they will be allowed to go out again.

Just as there is much work involved with going outside, Angotti explains there is a lot of planning to do before a field trip and lots of management while on the trip. Before taking



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students on a field trip, it is very important to create detailed plans of the trip. Students should be aware of these plans and be provided with a clear agenda so they will know what they will be doing. While on a trip, students should understand that the classroom rules still apply even though they are no longer in the school. Teachers should be proactive and plan to bring an appropriate number of chaperones on the trip. This way, students can be kept safe through the entire experience.

## Conclusion

Managing groups is very possible for every teacher in any situation. All it takes is good planning, patience, compassion, and lots of practice. These sections were provided to give teachers ideas of for managing groups that can serve as a base for other skills and techniques they will pick up throughout their schooling and career. Teachers should never give up and know that if things are going wrong, it is okay to change their routines. Everything is a learning experience and group management will grow easier with time.

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## **Organizing People: Managing schedules and Work-Life Balance**

According to an *Edutopia* author, Claudia Graziano, 45 percent of teachers have quit their education careers after five years, due to the major role of stress-related burnout (Five Tips)

In order to fight the burn out curve of the teaching career, one must balance work and personal life to maintain emotional, physical, and mental health stability.

### **Work-Life Balance**

Donald Trump said “if you’re interested in ‘balancing’ work and pleasure, stop trying to balance them. Instead make your work more pleasurable”, which is a suggestion that can be used in all careers, specifically for teaching (BrainyQuote, 2014).

Work related stress can set a thick unattractive film on personal life. An online site, Career Psychologists calls work-life balance, “working equilibrium” (Work-Life Balance, 2013).

The career psychologists blame unbalanced equilibriums on the business trends of having higher expectations for employees resulting in longer work

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hours. These high pressures can be felt by both men and woman and for single people as well as those with families.

Cris Hunt, a former teacher who is an author for *The Guardian: Professional Development* discusses what a an unbalanced teacher feels like.

So you've just got home; you have to collect the kids from their nursery, cook tea, clear up and then start your marking. Then the preparation for the next day starts. You put your children to bed; one of them is in tears because she is being bullied at school. The other one has just landed a principal role in the school production. Neither of them wanted to tell you earlier because you looked so busy and they knew you had so much to do. You get finished by 9:30 pm then you shower and get ready for the next day. It's now 10 pm. But then there's that report your headteacher has said: "Can you please complete this by tomorrow?" (Hunt, 2013)



Hunt proposes the idea of teacher guilt and how this guilt can effect teachers’ personal lives, and spin stress out of control. Stress can effect family life, where a teacher may choose to

stay home and grade papers when the rest of the family is going out for a movie night. These choices can strain relationships, emotions, and health over time.

### Managing Stress

A part of having a healthy work-life balance it to also be able to manage stress.

Marilu Henner once said “Being in control of your life and having realistic expectations about your day-to-day challenges are the keys to stress management, which is perhaps the most important ingredient to living a happy, healthy and rewarding life.” (BrainyQuote, 2014)

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There are several things in teaching that can trigger stress and impact teachers' working equilibrium. Marie Delaney wrote in a article called “Teacher stress, well-being and stress management - Taking care of yourself so that you can take care of your students” posted on the British Council website, which explains main reasons why teachers are stressed and what they can do about it (Delaney, 2013). Delaney describes these triggers as teachers striving to be perfect, try harder, and to stay strong. These unrealistic ambitions cause stress when teachers think they “failed” to succeed. Therefore, teachers need to be realistic on their ambitions (Delaney, 2013). Instead of trying to be perfect, teachers need to acknowledge that mistakes can be beneficial for growth. Trying harder is not always efficient. Teachers need to try something different and

not get upset when something does not work every time. Lastly, teachers are human and can be human. Humans have feelings and emotions that should not be concealed to appear “strong”, like a robot (Delaney, 2013).

There are several strategies that teachers can use to keep their spirits up and remain effective. Delaney's first suggestion is for teachers to focus on only what they can control by making a list of things that are causing stress and then dividing the list in two, to separate the things that are controllable or not at the moment. Another suggestion is to “be your own best friend” by talk-

ing to yourself in a positive way. Delaney also says to train “yourself to see the positive” by writing down six highlights of the day every night (Delaney, 2013).

### **Time Management**

“Waste your money and you’re only out of money, but waste your time and you’ve lost a part of your life”, wise words from Michael LeBoef, relevant directly to the importance of time management to establish a balance of work and personal life.

As a teacher, time management is one of the most important skills to have to keep sane through out the day and over time. John Alfuth, an author for online teacher resources, [\*The Educator’s Room\*](#) and [\*Bluff City Education\*](#), gives suggestions about time management based on what he uses for time management methods in his everyday life (Alfuth, 2014). The first thing that Alfuth suggests, which he wishes he did in the beginning of his teaching career, is to write a list detailing what is desired to be accomplished in the personal life, outside of work. For example, exercise, starting and finishing a free choice book, church, family dinner, other recreational activities, are all components of personal life that can be short chained because of busy careers. This list is to serve as a guide for the teacher to prioritize highly as he or she creates their work schedule.

Next Alfuth shares that he creates a detailed schedule of the next day the night before. Creating a daily schedule the night before, develops a game plan for a busy person that needs to prioritize actions and keep track of how much time is to be spent on each component of the day. He estimates that it “takes 10 to 15 minutes” but he says the schedule increases his productivity dramatically and it forces him to “think through what (he) can realistically accomplish on a daily basis” (Alfuth, 2014).

Prioritizing must be done to create a realistic schedule and a happy teacher. The schedule can also be used as a reflective tool for teachers to go back and see what they spent the most time on in a week or month. Alfuth explained that during a vacation break he reflected on what he was spending the most time on, grading, which is a low priority for him (Alfuth, 2014). He then realized that he was spending almost no time on communicating with parents, which he prioritized very high. Therefore, he made grading more efficient and less taxing so there would be more time to call parents weekly.

A part of prioritizing is to “say no” when there are too many entrees on once plate. Alfuth describes how it “can be tempting to take on every new initiative that comes your way” but when

extra participation is limited to just a few high priority activities it allows the teacher to participate to his or her best abilities (Alfuth, 2014).

### **Ask for Advise**

Hearing others' advise about how to manage stress can be beneficial especially for a pre-service teacher or a teacher who is just learning the ropes.

Alyson Brown, a UMF graduate of 2007, is completing her sixth year teaching and currently serves at Lawrence High School in Fairfield, Maine. She discusses how she limits stress and establishes a work-life balance within her busy teaching schedule.

When asked "how do you keep your work life separate from schools?", Brown answered I "Get as much work done at school as I can. I don't let things pile up. I have all my lessons planned ahead. However, I do bring work home sometimes but I'm not spending my whole weekend or whole night grading." Brown's suggestions naturally sums up the research and evidence gathered in the above sections.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Being stressed is not fun for anyone that are involved. Students do not want to have an anxious worried teacher that seems to be never prepared and happy. Everything that teachers do is suppose to benefit students' learning. Well being stressed out of their minds will not benefit students at all. Teachers' attitude's towards their job and school will be a major factor on their students' attitudes towards school.

At the end of this section, I want you to read Alyson Brown's concluding words at the end of her email to me.

"Here's the way I see it, I have kids in my classroom with unbelievably difficult lives-who are facing more stress than I ever will- they are homeless or in abusive situations or are in abject poverty. My struggles and stresses as a teacher are nothing compared to what those kids are growing up with. I need to be conscious of that. My job is to give those kids my best. I can't do that if I'm stressed all the time. I don't let the stress of my job consume and demoralize me. I always tell my kids I have the best job in the world. If I enjoy coming to school everyday, and I love what I do and I show it, it rubs off on the kids!".



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